



## Frances L. LaRocco

July 3, 2019

Our beautiful and beloved mother, Frances Linnea LaRocco, passed away in her sleep on Wednesday, July 3, 2019, at Reservoir nursing home in West Hartford, one month short of her 99th birthday. Born August 16, 1920 in Sister Bay Wisconsin, Fran was the daughter of the Reverend Johan Samuel Lundgren and Alice Mamie Rosen of Evanston Ill. She was predeceased by her first husband Herbert F. Englund Sr. and second husband Elia LaRocco as well as her brothers, Milton, Oliver, Henry and George Lundgren, twin sister, Ruth Wellschlager and stepdaughter Sandra LaRocco.

Frances is survived by her loving children Lois L. Matson of West Hartford CT. (husband, Steve/Randy) and Herbert F. Englund of Old Saybrook, CT. (wife, Susan). The delight of her life were her grandchildren: Jessica Brand of Wilton, CT. (husband, Matt), Erin Matson of Chicago, Ill. (husband, Tom Keating), Christopher Englund of Beverly, Ma. (husband, George) and Shelby Fischer of Cumberland, RI. (husband, Nate). Fran also leaves four great grandsons, Gavin, Jackson, Eli and Grant. Photos of each would instantly bring a warm loving smile to her face. Three stepchildren, Joanne Murphy, Diana LaRocco and Karen LaRocco survive her as well as several nieces and nephews.

Fran loved her siblings and shared many stories of her brother's escapades. Her fondest memories, she wrote, were of her glorious teen years, [in Superior WI.], experiencing the exhilaration of ice skating around the clock (or so it seemed) the building of igloos and secret tunnels under the deep snow, the cracking of the whip on the ice, endless tobogganing, and riding their Sparkstudding (Swedish for kick-sled; a chair on runners). She continued to reminisce about arising at 4:30 am. to attend Yulotta (Swedish Christmas Service) where she sang in the choir the hymns of her father's native land, Sweden, not understanding most of the words, fighting the giggles over their strange sounds. "How angry we all felt to rise so early in the morning. The boys would go out to crank our 1923 Buick Touring and if it did not turn over off we would march to church in the dark and cold, in our long winter underwear and scarfs wrapped around our noses. How beautifully haunting that memory is now".

Frances revered her father, Samuel, who at 16 said a final goodbye to his family in Kristinehamn Sweden and like thousands of other Swede's, immigrated to the US, through Boston. Following work as a machinist for the Hartford New Haven railroad, he moved to Chicago to become a Swedish Baptist Minister following graduation from the Morgan Park Seminary that was affiliated with the University of Chicago. Fran's most loving memories were of her mother, Alice, born in Evanston Ill., who in spite of all the hard physical work of raising 6 children on a meager depression era income, cooking on a cast iron wood stove, hand-scrubbing and ironing clothes. "never once raised her voice in anger."

Besides the golden years spent in Superior, the family moved several times across the U.S. as her father moved from one church to the next. From her birthplace of Sister Bay WI, the family moved by train to San Francisco. It was here she attained early fame, making front-page news after tumbling from her 2nd story bedroom window. After San Francisco the family moved back east to Superior and then finally moved to Brooklyn N.Y. where she finished high school. Following that was secretarial school and working in Manhattan for McCall's magazine and Shell Oil Company at Rockefeller Center. It was towards the end of WWII that she met her husband Herbert who during the war had served in the Army in the Pacific theater

On June 9, 1945, Fran's father, who had retired to New Boston Mass., jointly performed the marriages of both of his twin daughters, Fran and Ruth, to each of their husbands in New Boston, MA.

Fran and husband Herb lived in Brooklyn until 1955 when they moved with their young children to Meriden CT. She was particularly proud of her years as a senior secretary for the Central Bank for Savings (previously Meriden savings Bank) following her husband Herbert's death in 1967, when she was forced to return to work to support her two teenage children. A number of years later, Fran met Elia (Rocky) LaRocco from Torrington CT. and in 1977 were joined in marriage at Center Church in Torrington, enjoying their life together in Torrington CT. Following a stroke, Rocky, a veteran of WWII, passed away in February 1991.

Fran's legacy was her artistic accomplishments including painting and rug hooking – she never met a craft she couldn't excel in. She also loved nature, gardening, making jelly from her garden, pressing wildflowers, picking blueberries back in Wisconsin, feeding us seaweed, above all, the wild birds she fed. Music was also important to her, especially old hymns, classical and the American standards by Steven Foster. At the age of 92, she mastered the ability to send messages from her iPad that quite often reached the intended recipient. Fran loved her church which brought her joy and comfort. She sang with the

Torrington Bells and Beaux, served as a Hospice volunteer, and helped with the Christmas Fair at Center Church, Torrington.

We are grateful for her love, strength & the many talents with which she inspired her children & grandchildren. We are so grateful she was able to meet her 2 great grandsons, Gavin & Jackson, in her final months before passing. We will miss you so much, mom.

Services will be private. Please extend a kindness today in Fran's behalf. In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the Audubon Society in her name.

# Comments

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“ You do not know me but my name is Darlene. Frances' grandson Chris and husband George has shared Frances' rocking chair with my son Ben and I. Ben has special needs. He is nonverbal but as you can see the smile on his face, we will love Frances' special rocking chair for years to come! We have named her Miss Frances. Thanks so much!



**Darlene Franzone** - July 11, 2019 at 04:00 PM

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“ Herb, Sue, Lois, Randy and Loved Ones,  
Heartfelt condolences on Fran's passing. She was a pretty amazing lady. You're all in our thoughts, hearts and prayers. Fran, Rest In Peace.  
David and Patricia Shuck

**Patricia & David Shuck** - July 09, 2019 at 07:56 PM

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“ Wow! What a lady.  
I am so sorry for your loss.  
Peace and Love.  
Karen

**Karen Butler** - July 09, 2019 at 06:00 AM